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TELEGRAM

January 14, 2004

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 163 - ROUTINE)
TAGS: ECON, ELAB, SOCI
Captions: None
Subject: UAE LABOR MINISTRY REGISTERS 13,000 UNEMPLOYED,
ACKNOWLEDGES 6.5 PERCENT NATIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
Ref: None

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 00163

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: ECON
INFO: POL P/M AMB DCM
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INFO: FCS

DISSEMINATION: ECON
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: DCM: RALBRIGHT
DRAFTED: ECON:CMCRUMPLER
CLEARED: NONE

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3010
INFO RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 000163

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/PPR

E.O. 12958: DECL 01/13/14
TAGS: [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [KWMN](#) [SOCI](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: UAE LABOR MINISTRY REGISTERS 13,000 UNEMPLOYED,
ACKNOWLEDGES 6.5 PERCENT NATIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

11. (U) Classified by Deputy Chief of Mission Richard A. Albright for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

12. (C) Summary and comment: The UAE Ministry of Labor released a landmark report this week confirming that 13,000 UAE nationals currently are unemployed. An official from Tanmia -- the national employment agency that informs job seekers of job vacancies and provides training -- separately confirmed that the number of registered job seekers has nearly doubled in the last couple of years. Although national unemployment in the UAE remains well below that of other Middle Eastern countries, the UAEG's public acknowledgment of the problem is unprecedented.

Moreover, we suspect the released unemployment figures could be significantly higher, given the UAEG's historical inability to compile reliable federal statistics. End summary and comment.

13. (SBU) The Ministry of Labor report released this week implied that the national unemployment rate is about 6.5 percent, and cautioned that unemployment is likely to rise because 13,000 new graduates enter the job market each year. The report also confirmed that the size of the UAE national workforce now stands at 200,000 -- nationals therefore are an approximate 11 to 13 percent of the UAE's total workforce. The UAE Minister of Labor was quoted as stressing the importance of training nationals to better compete with expatriates for jobs in both the public and private sectors.

14. (C) Separately, Director of Abu Dhabi's Tanmia Office Jaber Al-Khemairi told Econoff that Tanmia has witnessed an exponential increase in registered jobseekers during the last two years. More than 10,000 nation-wide are registered with the employment agency and attend Tanmia training courses on a regular basis. Tanmia's clientele increased by 3,000 jobseekers in the last year alone. Al-Khemairi said that it takes an average of one year for a UAE national to find work, largely because new graduates' unrealistic salary and work expectations and limited job opportunities for women hinder employment. Most recent graduates are unwilling to fill entry-level positions and expect management positions immediately post-graduation. Al-Khemairi said Tanmia has made limited progress in modifying graduates' salary and work expectations.

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